

Sycamore Tribune March, 1938

## **Will Dramatize Life of Roy J. Snell on Radio**

### **Broadcast To Be Heard Wednesday Night**

The dramatization of the life and career of Roy J. Snell, famous writer, former resident of Sycamore and son of the late James Snell, prominent Mayfield farmer, will be heard from WBBM, Chicago, Wednesday night March 29, on a coast-to-coast network.

Residents of the city wishing to hear the broadcast are urged to consult Wednesday's radio program for exact time.

The dramatization will be on the Eddy Guest program sponsored by Household Finance Co.

A graduate of Sycamore High School and a cousin of Mrs. Lydia Stafford of Sycamore, Mr. Snell's life has been one of adventure such as not often comes into a man's life.

The Chicago Tribune recently published an article relating to the experiences of Mr. Snell which follows:

From the time he was 14 years old Roy J. Snell of Wheaton, formerly of Sycamore, wanted to write books. Until he was 35, he tried grown up stories, but without success. Then one day he wrote a children's story and it became the first of 60 books for boys and girls of which he is the author.

Many of the books that have delighted youngsters far and wide have been written in the Wheaton home where Mr. Snell has resided for the past ten years. Sales have reached a total of 800,000 volumes. Mystery plots predominate. Travels to

out of the way places have furnished characters and settings.

### **Has Had Many Adventures**

Not all of Mr. Snell's stories are based on his own adventures, but he insists that you must have had adventures to have a proper feeling for them. He has had many adventures and for the most part they came in the line of duty.

Although he was born at Ladonia Mo., 30 miles from Mark Twain's birthplace, imprint on the environments had little to do with his becoming an author, for his family moved to Sycamore, when he was a year old, and it was there he spent his boyhood. After working his way through Wheaton academy and college, Mr. Snell became a school teacher in one of the "feud counts of the Kentucky Cumberlands."

### **Was in Charge of Eskimos**

The Kentucky experience was followed by a journey to far off Alaska, where Mr. Snell was sent by the American Missionary association. Here he found himself in charge of 350 Eskimos and 1500 reindeer. He crossed the Bering straits in a skin boat, and life in the Eskimo village had its tribulations, but out of the experience in 1916 came the first of Mr. Snell's 60 books, "Little White Fox and His Arctic Friends."

Years were to pass however, after his return from Alaska, before Mr. Snell's writings found favor with publishers and public. For a time he conducted a crossroad store in the state of Washington, and later returned to Wheaton with his total profit of \$100. David C. Cook Jr. of the Elgin Publishing Company, had been a college classmate, and to him Mr. Snell submitted a story which was accepted.

### **Went to France in 1914**

As a night watchman at the Chicago Seminary, where he became a student, Mr. Snell found further time for writing. He was graduated from the seminary in 1914, and obtained his master's degree from the University of Chicago in 1917. His stories had begun to attract attention, but with the coming of world war he went to France and spent six months with the Y.M.C.A. in the first zone of advance. At the close of the war he returned to Wheaton.

Since then, his permanent writing address has been his home in Wheaton, but Mr. Snell and his wife and three sons have a summer cabin on Isle Royale in Lake Superior, and there are frequent trips to far off places.

On his most recent trip for material Mr. Snell flew from Edmonton, Canada, 500 miles down the McKenzie river to Fort Chipewean. Among the relics in his study is a voodoo drum from Haiti.

### **Mystery Well Liked**

"For many years," said the author, "I made it a point to sell books at Christmas time at a State street store, and I discovered that what boys and girls like most was mystery. Almost all successful children's books are a series of adventures tied together with one or more threads of mystery.

"I have found that if you cannot recognize something unusual in the world about you, you will not succeed as a writer. And you must be able to concentrate to hold your mind upon one single thing for ten or fifteen minutes. I pull down the shades, take up a pencil, write steadily for twenty minutes, and in that time turn out from 1200 to 1800 words. For every hour I spend writing, I spend four thinking the things through.

### **"Ticket To Adventure" Next**

"A writer must travel, and in search of material I have sailed on the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Arctic. The greatest reward is in meeting the many young friends who have been pleased with your books and ask you to write more.

Mr. Snell's output last year included "The Crystal Ball," a girls' book, "Red Dynamite," a football story for boys, and "Under the Chewing Gum Tree" for younger children. His book, "Ticket to Adventure" is now on the press.